**Why This was the World's Most Important Airport**

What makes an airport important? We might talk of the busy ones or the famous ones. But there are airports that the world couldn't have done without. And an example of this world's most important is the Gander International Airport.

First off, it doesn't start off as being an international airport. So, what's the story of the Gander Airport? And how did it become the world's most important airport?

## **How It All Started**

At the easternmost tip of Canada, Daredevil pilots had long discovered the use of these Newfoundland fields in aviation. They used these grounds for taking off on their transatlantic trips. And soon enough, the British government saw the usefulness of this piece of land and built the Gander Airport. Here, we had the world's largest runway of the time. However, even after its opening, only a few planes were coming here. Now, this was because only a few planes could cross the Atlantic. A few tried and failed. About 40 lives got lost in the process.

## **Then Came the War**

However, a time came when the world needed Gander like no other. This was the same time a particular individual led the world to begin its heated World War II. This war came to the British, and it was essential to send bomber planes over the Atlantic to Britain. But the only means available then was via ships. This was happening slowly, not keeping up with the dynamics of the ongoing war. Besides, the Germans had their submarines take down the supports. Hence, it became essential to decipher a new means of sending over supports across the Atlantic. This is where Gander Airport comes into the scene.

Given its location, farthest to the east, it was the logical ground to start a transatlantic journey. So, they now only had to make planes that could cross the Atlantic from Gander. This, the British were able to accomplish with extra fuel chambers. Thus, planes only needed to stop for a refuel at Gander before heading on to Europe. The first successful flights were in 1940, when seven planes were able to cross the Atlantic. And throughout the war, a total of 20,000 planes had crossed the Atlantic in support of the British command.

## **After the War**

So, what happened when the war ended? Commercial travels started making use of the Gander Airport too. Soon, Gander was the buzz of the world. Of course, as the crossroads of the world, you wouldn't expect any less. There was, however, a slight issue here. The terminal retained its military look even though the war was no more. The government figured this wasn't an excellent impression for the number of passengers going through here.

With $3 Million, they made the Gander International Lounge — a massive upgrade from the former military hanger room. This soon became the perfect companion to the now Gander International Airport. And even its opening was a story to write about as the Queen of England was there herself. Sadly, from this time on, Gander International Airport started diving downhill as people needed it less.

In the 1960s, jet engines came into view. With these new engines, planes were now able to fly higher and faster. Of course, they were also able to cover longer distances. And this was the end to the busy days at Gander. Gradually, planes no longer needed to stop at Gander for refuel. And this soon became so rampant that the day-to-day activities at Gander dwindled.

However, for some time after the introduction of jet engines, Gander still maintained few of its visitors. Most of these were communists who could not go through the American airspace. Hence, they had to stop over at Gander before heading on to Cuba. Gander was like the mid-spot if you were traveling between Morocco and Havana. This also made Gander a good place for defectors to hide. And it became necessary for the government to level up its security to reduce this outrage. Soon, the era of the communists also came to an end. And the large Gander airway became "quiet."

## **The Gander International Airport Today**

Today, most flights coming in are of the military. Sometimes, some emergency landings happened. And other times, some private flights could come through here on business. But mostly, busy commercial flights were now a thing of the past. This has continued till now and has affected quite a lot regarding the running of the airport.

In all, its peculiar location made it the most important runway in the world at a time. However, that isn't all that made Gander a name we would never stop talking about. As it seems Gander would always be a place that shows up to help in times of need, it proved this again at another point in history. This was the period of the 9/11 event. On this day, American soil experienced such a tragedy that shook the world to its core. The Towers of the World Trade Center had gotten attacked, among other places. The U.S airspace had to go off, and soon enough, all planes headed in that direction had to find a new space to land.

Planes had no choice but to land in Canada, and 38 of these found their way to Gander International Airport. On a day the world witnessed one of its biggest tragedies, love prevailed! In this small town of Gander, a town built around the airport during its busy days, about 7000 people found a new family. These were in disarray upon suddenly staying in a strange place where they knew nothing about. But they got a shocker when they walked into the lounge and met strangers offering them food and clothing. They literally couldn't feel they were in the wrong place with the hospitality they received. And till today, the world still remembers Gander for who they were on this sad day in history.

### **Conclusion**

Years later, though the world recalls why this is the most important airport, its runway remains silent. And now, everyone waits to see what will become of this special place as it finds its way back to being one of the busiest places on earth again.